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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 26, 2017

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
AT SIGNING OF EXECUTIVE ORDER
ON THE ANTIQUITIES ACT

The Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

11:34 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mike. He's been a great Vice President, a great help. And everybody loves Mike Pence. I just want to thank you for your service. Been incredible. (Applause.)

It's a real pleasure to be at the Department of Interior, where you help preserve the splendor and the beauty of America's natural resources. And I can tell you the group that's in here right now, they really do the job. Right, Lisa? They're doing a good job. We're going to take care of Alaska, too. Don't worry about it. (Laughter.) And they protect the ability of the people to access and utilize the land which truly belongs to them and belongs to all of us.

Secretary Ryan Zinke is doing an incredible job -- and he never overlooks the details. He's a detail person. Soon after he was confirmed, we had a snowstorm, big one, and he was out there on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial shoveling the snow all by himself. And he's a strong guy. He did a good job. (Laughter.) He did a very, very good job. But we're proud of him.

In the first 100 days, we have taken historic action to eliminate wasteful regulations. They're being eliminated like nobody has ever seen before. There has never been anything like it. Sometimes I look at some of the things I'm signing I say maybe people won't like it, but I'm doing the right thing. And no regular politician is going to do it. (Laughter.) I don't know if you folks would do -- I will tell you literally some politicians have said, you're doing the right thing. I don't know if I would have had the courage to do some of these things. But we're doing them because it's the right thing to do. And it's for the good of the nation.

We're returning power back to the people. We've eliminated job-destroying regulations on farmers, ranchers, and coal miners, on autoworkers, and so many other American workers and businesses.

Today, I am signing a new executive order to end another egregious abuse of federal power, and to give that power back to the states and to the people, where it belongs.

The previous administration used a 100-year-old law known as the Antiquities Act to unilaterally put millions of acres of land and water under strict federal control -- have you heard about that? -- eliminating the ability of the people who actually live in those states to decide how best to use that land.

Today, we are putting the states back in charge. It's a big thing.

I am pleased to be joined by so many members of Congress and governors who have been waiting for this moment, including Governor Herbert of Utah. Thank you, thank you, Governor. Governor LePage of Maine, who, by the way, has lost a lot of weight. (Laughter.) I knew him when he was heavy, and now I know him when he's thin, and I like him both ways, okay? (Laughter.) Done a great job. Governor Calvo of Guam. Thank you. Governor Torres from the Northern Mariana Islands. Thank you, thank you, Governor.

I also want to recognize Senator Orrin Hatch, who -- believe me, he's tough. He would call me and call me and say, you got to do this. Is that right, Orrin?

SENATOR HATCH: That's right.

THE PRESIDENT: You didn't stop. He doesn't give up. And he's shocked that I'm doing it, but I'm doing it because it's the right thing to do. But I really have to point you out, you didn't stop.

And, Mike, the same thing. So many people feel -- Mike Lee -- so many people feel so strongly about this, and so I appreciate your support and your prodding, and your never-ending prodding, I should say, because we're now getting something done that many people thought would never ever get done, and I'm very proud to be doing it in honor of you guys, okay? Thank you. (Applause.)

Altogether, the previous administration bypassed the states to place over 265 million acres -- that's a lot of land, million acres. Think of it -- 265 million acres of land and water under federal control through the abuse of the monuments designation. That's larger than the entire state of Texas.

In December of last year alone, the federal government asserted this power over 1.35 million acres of land in Utah, known as Bears Ears -- I've heard a lot about Bears Ears, and I hear it's beautiful -- over the profound objections of the citizens of Utah. The Antiquities Act does not give the federal government unlimited power to lock up millions of acres of land and water, and it's time we ended this abusive practice.

I've spoken with many state and local leaders -- a number of them here today -- who care very much about preserving our land, and who are gravely concerned about this massive federal land grab. And it's gotten worse and worse and worse, and now we're going to free it up, which is what should have happened in the first place. This should never have happened.

That's why today I am signing this order and directing Secretary Zinke to end these abuses and return control to the people -- the people of Utah, the people of all of the states, the people of the United States.

Every day, we are going to continue pushing ahead with our reform agenda to put the American people back in charge of their government and their lives.

And again, I want to congratulate the Secretary. I want to congratulate Orrin and Mike and all of the people that worked so hard on bringing it to this point. And tremendously positive things are going to happen on that incredible land, the likes of which there is nothing more beautiful anywhere in the world. But now tremendously positive things will happen.

So I want to thank you. I want to thank everybody for being here. God bless you all and God bless America. Thank you. Thank you very much. So I'll sign.

(The executive order is signed.) (Applause.)

Q Are you surprised about this 9th Circuit ruling?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm never surprised by the 9th Circuit. (Laughter.) As I said, we'll see them in the Supreme Court. (Laughter and applause.)

END

11:42 A.M. EDT

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